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Letters From Mrs. Ralph Izard to Mrs. William Lee.

From Originals in Virginia Historical Society Collection.

[The writer of these letters was Alice De Lancey, of the distinguished New York family of the name, and wife of Ralph Izard, of South Carolina. Mr. Izard (1742-1804) inherited a large estate, was educated at the University of Cambridge, and in December, 1776, was appointed by Congress commissioner to the Court of Tuscany. While filling this post he resided in Paris, where he remained until July 1st, 1780, when he returned to the United States. Later he was member of the Continental Congress and U. S. Senator. He was a man of much eloquence and ability and stood very high in the confidence of Washington. A volume of his correspondence has been published. Several portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Izard appear in the *Centennial History of the Inauguration of George Washington as First President of the United States*, N. Y. 1892. The letters were addressed Mrs. Hannah Lee, daughter of Philip Ludwell, of "Greenspring," Va., and wife of Wm. Lee, of Va., who during the Revolution was a representative of the Colonies at Paris, Vienna and The Hague.]

PARIS, Nov. 6, 1781.

My dear Madam:

I had the pleasure of receiving your kind favour yesterday, & am this early in acknowledging it that I may lose no time in informing Mr. Lee that I hear there are two vessels at L'Orient, which are expected to sail soon for Philadelphia. I am told there is an American Gentleman in Paris, whose name is Franks that is to go in one of them. Mrs. Wryght drank tea with me on Sunday & gave me this intelligence. She has not yet been at Versailles; but is employed in taking off the Duke of Orleans family; she came here with the design of going to America. Should she be successful in business I suppose she will make some stay; she complains heavily of the uneasiness she suffers from being totally ignorant of the French language & being

obliged to live in a small room up four pair of stairs. I told her I was surprised at her living in that style as I thought she had made a fortune in London. She answered that she lived certainly upon a good deal of money, but had found the means of spending it as fast as she made it.* The news of Coⁿ Lauren's arrivall is very true & I am very happy at it. They say he came over with a very large sum of money & many other necessaries. I am extremely obliged to you for the intelligence you write me. I do not see English papers & consequently shall be much indebted to you for whatever you will take the trouble of extracting from them. Mrs. Wright told me that Mrs. Montgomery, a Boston Lady, was in Paris. She is come over for the education of her son, & was to set out this day for Geneva. Had she been to make any stay I should have informed myself more particularly about her & have made an acquaintance with her. Mr. Griffiths, a young gentleman of Philadelphia, who is studying physick here, called on me with Mrs. Wright. He left Phil'a in August, said they dined seventeen Americans at Dr. Franklin's on Sunday. Mrs. Wright said she hoped I was to be of the next party. Many thanks to Mr. Lee for his enquiries at Messrs. Rombergs. I hear of no arrivals from America & begin to feel very anxious for Letters. The next will, I hope, be very agreeable. We have reason to expect pleasing events from the last intelligence. I am sorry to hear Mr. Lee's health is not good and sincerely wish it may soon be re-established. Many thanks to you, dear Madam, for your kind wishes. Charlotte is better, but I have no right to hope for a speedy recovery. The rest of my family are well & all join in best regards to you & Mr. Lee, & in love to the dear girls. I have had a Letter from Mrs. Blake,† at Margate, where she had just landed, when she

* Mrs. Patience Lovell Wright (1725-1785), of Bordentown, N. J., removed with her children in 1772 to London, where she became noted as a modeler in wax. She is stated to have modeled from life a bas-relief portrait bust of Washington. Her son, Joseph Wright, painted several portraits of Washington.

† Two members of the South Carolina family of Blake married ladies of the Izard family, and lived in England about this time. See *S. C. Hist. Mag.*, April, 1900.

wrote. My Comp^a, if you please, to Mr. Jenings,* & believe me to be, Dear Madam,

Your affec^{te} friend & obed^t Serv^t,

A. IZARD.

P. S. Nov. 6th.

Just as I had finished my letter, Mr. Mayo, a countryman of yours, called upon me. He is going to Brussels & will have the pleasure of delivering this to you. I have now seen Major Franks.† He sets off to-morrow for Nantes & expects to sail in about a fortnight for America. He told me would take care of any Letters Mr. Lee wished to send, & that if they were addressed to Mr. Johnsons, he should receive them. He told me he was well acquainted with Mr. Izard, Mr. A. Lee & Mr. Shippen, & that he left them well at Philadelphia the end of July.

Mrs. Montgomery‡ is of Philadelphia. Mr. Mayo told me he had heard her say that she brought Letters from Mr. Izard for me, & this determined me to see her if possible. I waited on her yesterday morning & found her ready to begin her journey. The letter she brought was one of those I received before I left Brussels, which she had forwarded from L'Orient. Philadelphia is very gay. The Chevalier de la Luzerne § much liked, & appears much pleased. Number of unhappy people had arrived there in Cartel ships from Carolina.

Paris, 6 Dec., 1781.

You can never be a troublesome correspondent to me, Dear Madam, so pray make no apologies for writing frequently. Your letters will always give me great pleasure & I shall be happy

* Edmund Jenings, son of Edmund Jenings, Secretary of State of Maryland, and grandson of Edmund Jenings, Governor of Virginia. He was a warm friend of the Colonies. In 1768 he presented to the gentlemen of Westmoreland county, Va., the portrait of Chatham, by Charles Willson Peale, now in the Hall of the House of Delegates, Richmond. He was uncle to Edmund Randolph. He died unmarried in 1819.

† Probably David S. Franks, of Pennsylvania, Major Continental line.

‡ Probably the wife of John Montgomery, an eminent merchant of Philadelphia.

§ French Minister to the United States 1779-83.

whenever I can answer them to your satisfaction. I hear that there is a Newspaper containing the account you mention of an engagement in Carolina, at Passy, but I have not been so fortunate as to see it, nor do I know of any possible way of being able to procure it, otherwise I certainly would use all my endeavour to do so and send a copy of the contents to Mr. Lee. What I have heard of the affair is as follows: Gen. Greene has been for some time at Santee, from whence he made an excursion as far as Dorchester, where he met with a large party of the English, under Gen'l Stewart. The engagement* was warm and bloody. The Americans had greatly the advantage at first, & obliged the enemy to quit the field. They took shelter in a large house which was near the scene of action, & from thence in their turn annoyed our army very much. Every effort was used to dislodge them, but in vain, & Gen. Greene returned to his old post at Santee. Coll. Washington† was slightly wounded & is a prisoner. I am told the particulars are printed in the French Gazette, so that you will probably have seen much more perfect & satisfactory account of it before you receive this. The English loss is said to be much greater than ours. Mr. Barclay, our Consul General, left Philadelphia the beginning of Oct^r and arrived about a fortnight ago at L'Orient with his wife and family. He left them there with Mr. & Mrs. Moyland & came to Paris immediately. He did me the favor to call on me last Sunday on his way to Passy. His visit was short and I had not time to ask half the questions I wished to do. He told me he should set out on Wednesday for Amsterdam, where he did not intend staying long, & that he should return through Brussels. He hoped to have the pleasure of seeing you there. He brought me letters from Mr. Izard, the last is dated the 26th of Sept'. He had just heard of Mon^e de Grasse's arrival & was in a very high spirits. He was to set out in a few days for the Southern Province with several of his countrymen. They were going to endeavor to join Gov^r Rutledge in Carolina, with the hope of establishing Civil Government at Camden or some other part of

* The battle of Eutaw Springs, September 8, 1781.

† Colonel William Washington.

the State. He writes me that "when Gen. Green went to the Southward his army was unprovided with almost every necessary. The very absurd conduct of L^d Cornwallis in passing like a meteor thro' half the continent without taking proper precautions to secure any part, enabled Gen. Greene to get into So. Carolina. All the Forts in the interior part of the Country have either been taken or abandoned. Gen. Greene besides taking a sufficient number of Prisoners to relieve all our Countrymen from Captivity, has found in these forts a considerable quantity of arms, cloathing, Blanketts, Rum, Salt, Medicines, & in short every thing that he wanted. The Enemy have frequently been beaten, & I hope will be soon confined to Charles Town."

In another part of his letter he says: "You wish to be in Philadelphia, & were you here you would repent having changed your situation. About sixty gentlemen who were sent to Augustine in violation of the Capitulation of Charles Town are exchanged, and arrived in this city. More than double that number who were forced by British tyranny on board of Prison ships in Charles Town Harbour, are likewise exchanged and arrived here. Between three & four hundred women & children, many of them among the most opulent of our country, have been banished by the Commandant of Charles Town, & are arrived in Philadelphia. You will easily conceive the distress which must be occasioned by so many people almost destitute of everything, being thrown into this city where everything is double & some articles four times as dear as at Brussels. Money for their immediate support has been raised by subscription, but still the distress continues & is like to continue until we recover our country." The letter from whence I have made these extracts, is dated 30th Aug^r. In that of the 26th Sept^r, he says: "I was just going to close my letter when the important intelligence of the Count de Grasse's arrival came to hand. In less than a fortnight I think Ld. Cornwallis will be completely invested by land and by water. In the meantime every precaution is taken to prevent his escape. I have never experienced so much pleasure since I left you as I do at this moment, as I have the greatest expectation of our being in possession of Charles Town & all the Southern States this Winter." He adds: "Present my Compliments to Mr. & Mrs. Lee & to Mr. Jenings. I

am extremely sorry to hear of Mr. Lee's indisposition. If he could submit to the muds of St. Amand* for two & forty days four hours a day & drink the waters, as a friend of his did, I am persuaded he would receive great benefit from them. I shall give this letter to the care of Mr. Thomas Barclay who goes to France as Consul from the United States. He is a very worthy man & if he goes to Brussels he will call on you." Mr. Barclay is of Pennsylvania. Many thanks to you, dear Madam, for your kind intention of sending me the King's speech, I saw it last night. It is much more moderate than any former one has been; I do not wonder that it should be however. My little folks are to be inoculated the 10th. I am much obliged to you for your good wishes for them & for your inquiries about Charles. He is perfectly satisfied with his College & that makes me very happy, I am still more so at finding that his Masters are satisfied with him. My daughters join me in best compliments to you & Mr. Lee & in love to the young Ladies; you will soon have the pleasure of seeing William & I hope will find him all that you can desire. I am, dear Madam,

Your affect. friend & Serv^t,

A. IZARD.

PARIS, Feb'y 10, 1782.

My dear Madam,

I have been much longer silent than I intended to have been since I received your last, doubt not but that you will think me negligent in not having written to inform you of the Marquis de La Fayette's arrival, & yet that very circumstance has occasioned my not doing so. I have been in constant expectation of seeing him & of giving you more satisfactory intelligences after that event than I could possibly do before it. Hitherto I have been disappointed. He & the Marquise have been so obliging as to appoint an evening for calling on me. She was so good as to come & did me the favour to say that he was extremely sorry at not being able to do so, that he was prevented by business, just as he was going to step into the carriage. He has promised that he will take the first convenient hour they have for

* A French town noted for its hot baths.

seeing me. I really am very anxious to see one who has so nobly distinguished himself in a cause we have so much at heart. He is to return to America very soon. The officers who have arrived from thence give very favorable accounts of the Country & its Inhabitants. It is now very much the fashion to wish to go to America, many of the young Nobility are soliciting it as a great favour. I am quite delighted with the Marquise; she speaks with great warmth & affection of our Hero Washington & says that I must look upon her as an American, for her heart is entirely so. You have, I dare say, seen the account in the Leyden Gazette of her receiving the news of her Husband's arrival while at dinner at the Hotel de Ville. It is literally true in all its circumstances. I can not find that any particular account of the situation of affairs in America has transpired since the arrival of the Alliance, nor do I know any news to communicate to you. I return you & Mr. Lee many thanks for your goodness in enquiring for Letters for me. I have received none since those by Mr. Barclay. If Mr. Lee will do me the favour to enclose me a Letter for Mr. Izard I will endeavour to forward it, if not before the Marquis de la Fayette's departure, I certainly shall have an opportunity then. I write very frequently but seldom with hopes of my letters reaching him. One out of a dozen may perhaps be so fortunate & therefore I give them a chance.

Mr. Sayre* called on me about a week ago, I have not seen or heard of him since. I think Abbe Needham made a very graceless will and I am sorry for his sister who seems to be a very worthy woman. What I mentioned of Mrs. Taylor was a mere flight of fancy, I beg you will think it is. It was mentioned to me with a laugh & I never meant seriously about it. What I said with regard to Masters was only for one scholar. I paid more if they staid more than an hour, otherwise not. I am much obliged to you for the letter you enclosed me signed J. D.

* Stephen Sayre, a native of Long Island, N. Y., and a banker in London. In 1774 he was one of the sheriffs of that city, with another American, William Lee, as his colleague. During the Revolution he was in the service of the United States on the Continent. He died September 27, 1818, at "Brandon," Middlesex county, Virginia, the residence of his son, who had married a Miss Grymes, of that place.

I fancy that gentleman is pretty well known here now. I gave it to a friend of mine who is more in the way of politics than I am. I receive the London Courant regularly by means of a friend at Court. I was much pleased with reading the Edinburgh Association Resolves & the manly speeches of the Assembly of Barbadoes. Ad'l Rodney is out at last, & so it is said is the Spanish Fleet. The latter is so much superior and should they meet there is little doubt of their success. If Fortune has played the old Knight one slippery trick, perhaps she may be induced to keep up the Game. He behaved so ill in his prosperity that he deserves all the ill luck that can befall him.

Gen'l Arnold you see is in high life in London. I think he did well to cross the Atlantic. He will be safer in the sea girt Britain than he could be on our Continent. I believe we had best not expect any very early good tidings from Charles Town. It is said to be very strong & the force under Gen'l Greene not sufficient to take it. I have not heard anything about Mr. Jefferson nor of the destination of Mr. de Barras. I see Coll. Searle sometimes & really was astonished at the account of the Commodore. I defer my Judgment till I hear his defence. The whole affair is a mystery. I never mentioned it to you because I did not know what to make of it. The Queen's entry was very magnificent & happily the whole ceremony concluded with fewer accidents than ever were known to happen on a similar occasion. I have been told that Mr. Stead was going to be married but I am sorry at not being able to answer your question satisfactorily as to the Lady. My Girls join me in best regards to you & Mr. Lee. I am, D^r Madam,

Your affect. friend & Serv't,

A. IZARD.

I am about an apartment in a private House * * in Marias where I think I shall be more at my * * * an Hotel Garni. When I am fixed I shall send * * address. Till then please to direct to me chez Mons. Banquier, Rue St. Sauveur, Paris.

À Madame Lee, St. Michael, Brussels.

HOTEL DE TOURS, PARIS, 11 March, 1782.

My dear Madam:

The day before yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving your favour of the 4th, enclosing a letter for Mr. Izard which I shall send with my own to the care of the Marquis de la Fayette. I have at last had the honor of seeing him & was very much pleased with his visit & conversation. He saw Mr. Izard very frequently while the latter was in Virginia. They dined with Ld. Cornwallis at Gen'l Knox's soon after his Ld. Ship's surrender. Mr. Izard was so vexed at the cruelty of his conduct throughout the whole course of his command, that he could not be induced to hold any conversation with him & it was with difficulty he was prevailed on to meet him at dinner. I have not heard anything of Mr. Jefferson & am not at all in the way of getting the authentic information you imagine, as I have not had the honour of seeing Mr. Temple Franklin since my return to Paris. I am much obliged to you for transcribing the paragraph from the English newspaper respecting Mr. Izard. The Hermione Frigate is lately arrived at Rochfort with the Baron de Viomenil & other French officers. Mr. de Clonard was at that Port on business when they landed, he saw them and was so good as to make very particular enquiries about Mr. Izard. They said he was well in January & mentioned the same circumstances with regard to him that you have copied for me. I likewise saw them in the Newspapers. These gentlemen added that he had got possession of his Estates. I dare not give credit to this news as they say at the same time that Gen'l Greene & his army were at the distance of twenty-five miles from Charles Town. The most valuable parts of Mr. I's possessions are within that distance, I therefore think he cannot be upon them. The remaining part of this paper I dedicate to transcripts from a letter I have just received from him & hope the one I enclose from your manager, Mr. Valentine, will contain agreeable accounts for you. Mr. Izard says, 30th Oct'r: "I am now at Mr. W. Lee's plantation* near James River, on my way to South Carolina. We shall cross the Ferry this morning. I wrote to you from

*Greenspring, near Williamsburg.

Head Quarters before York a few days ago & informed you of my mortification at finding that Mons. de Grasse with his fleet, were to return immediately to the West Indies. This is much to be lamented as it is the opinion of Mr. de Rochambeau & every other officer that if Charles Town were attacked with the whole force now in Virginia it would be taken in less than three weeks. Mr. de Grasse has entered into some engagement with the Spaniards which will oblige him to leave the Continent. A considerable reinforcement is going to Gen'l Greene which will give him a superiority over the Enemy. I think we shall be in possession of the Country & I hope the French Fleet will return soon & help us to drive the Enemy out of our Capital. I am exceedingly mortified at not being able to write you positively to come over. You will however consider the letters I have written you lately, & judge for yourself. The capture of L'd Cornwallis & his whole army is such a stroke against Great Britain that I think she must immediately make Peace; should that appear likely to be the case, would it not be better for you to wait a little longer & come over with everything you want without being afraid of an enemy? L'd Cornwallis & his plundering associates had robbed Mr. W. Lee of between 60 & 70 negroes. Half of them are recovered, but I fear the others are lost. His property here is considerable & his friends here are surprised that he does not come here & live on it. If he can reconcile himself to a Country life, he has every thing here that he can reasonably desire. The House in which I am now writing is a very large Mansion, at least as large as ours at Goose Creek & in a much more ruinous condition than that was when you saw it. I left my wagon and horses here at the desire of Mr. Richard Henry Lee when I went to Camp. Mr. Valentine, the manager, has behaved with the utmost civility & attention & seems to be a very honest, good sort of a man. I enclose a letter from him to Mr. Lee. I would write to Mr. Lee but as I have nothing political to inform him of except what I have written you, I must desire that you will communicate to him. Give my compliments to Mr. & Mrs. Lee & to Mr. Jenings. Harry in his last letter tells me he is very desirous of seeing his Mama, Brothers & Sisters. I gave him hopes that he should see you all in

the Spring, for I had no doubt of it; and still think that we will see you all in the Summer."

I have thus, Dear Madam, given you a faithful copy of Mr. Izard's letter that you & Mr. Lee may be able to form the best judgment on the situation of all affairs, both public & private. I do not think myself authorized to undertake a voyage to America either this Spring or Summer, but I shall be very happy if all circumstances will admit of my going out next Autumn.

What do you think of our making a party for that purpose? My best compliments to Mr. Lee & love to the young Ladies.

I am, dear Madam,

Your affec'te h'ble serv't, &c.,

A. IZARD.

The Duke de Lauzun's legion is gone to join Gen'l Greene.

PARIS, 25th March, 1782.

My dear Madam:

I am exceedingly uneasy at not having had the pleasure of hearing from you for such a length of time as has intervened since your last Letter & the more so as I wrote to you about three weeks ago, giving you a long extract from a letter I had that very day received from Mr. Izard & which was written from your house near James river, on the 30th Oct'r. I enclosed at the same time a letter from your Manager, Mr. Valentine, which Mr. Izard desired me to send you. Lest My letter should have miscarried I will again transcribe what Mr. Izard writes about your affairs. I have no later accounts from him but I am flattered with the hope that he has got possession of his Estates which some French gentlemen lately arrived from America have assured Mr. de Clonard of as a fact. It may be so, but until I have it under his own hand I cannot give a hearty credit to the news.

[The extract from Mr. Izard's letter, which has been before given, need not be repeated.]

I have indeed no thought of going out this Summer, but I some time please myself with the hopes that such a scheme may be practicable next Autumn. The English Newspapers

give us no great room to hope for Peace, from the present disposition of the House of Commons. Mr. Forth has spent some days in Paris & it is said he came to sound the inclinations of the French Ministry & of Dr. Franklin on that subject. He is returned for England & we may know more in a little while. The Island of St. Kits seems in a very doubtful situation. Had Admiral Hood been at a greater distance from it, I cannot help thinking it might have been full as well for the Inhabitants. They must then have submitted to the French without much loss or bloodshed, now they are harrassed by an Army in their Country which will undoubtedly suffer exceedingly.

I have a letter this Day from Mrs. Chabanel who informs me that Amsterdam has joined her voice to Friesse for the Independance of America. Pray present my best Compliments to Mr. Lee & accept both of my congratulations on the event. It comes rather late in the day & the blessing seems pretty well assured to us without their concurrence. I am much pleased at seeing that the French officers who have been in America speak with great regard of the country & its inhabitants & particularly of the virtue of the Ladies. Mrs. Lloyd is very much admired though neither he nor she are in high favour with their countrymen on account of their politics. I do not get this Intelligence from Mr. Izard. My family are all well. Peggy & Charlotte desire me to present their Compliments to you & the young Ladies. I am, Dear Madam, with all good wishes,

Your affect^e friend & Serv't,

A. IZARD.

My Comp'ts to Mr. Jennings.

PARIS, 9th Feb'ry, 1783.

My dear Madam:

Since I had the pleasure of writing to you I have received a letter from Mr. Danoot. The boxes I mentioned are also arrived, so I need not have troubled Mr. Lee with any commission about them. Mr. Danoot had been so good as to observe all my directions concerning them & they are all come safe. I begin now to feel the weight of the task I have in hand, of returning with so large a family, alone, to America. I am in the midst of preparations for that purpose & the things necessary to pre-

serve cleanliness, without any additional circumstances, run up to so great an amount that I am almost frightened at the undertaking. I must however go through it. Troublesome & expensive as it will be it must be done, & if we arrive safe & find Mr. Izard in good health, I shall be amply rewarded.

I have no news to inform you of. You have doubtless heard of the Treaty between America & Sweden. It was signed last week. The name of our country is high & she seems in the way of being courted & caressed by all the powers of Europe. It is said there are great discontents about the Peace in England. This you know more of than I do. With best compliments for Mr. Lee & good wishes for all the family, I am, Dear Madam, with great regard,

Yours,

A. IZARD.

VIRGINIA IN 1631.

[Abstracts by W. N. Sainsbury, and copies in McDonald Papers, Virginia State Library.]

THE MOVEMENT TO RE-ESTABLISH THE COMPANY.

[The year 1631 was chiefly notable for a vigorous attempt to secure the re-establishment of a Virginia Company. The inner history of this movement, and why it failed after so nearly attaining success, are now unknown. The colonists had been strongly opposed to the arbitrary dissolution of the Company; but had prospered under the crown, and did not wish to be again handed over to a corporation. Whatever the King's real reasons may have been, he acted wisely and in accordance with the wishes of the Virginians in refusing his assent to a new company.]

CLAIBORNE'S CASE.

(Abstract.)

1631. "Capt. Wm. Claiborne's case stated against Lord Baltimore." That Claiborne enters upon the Isle of Kent, un-